

AGENDA: October 8, 2002

4.1

CATEGORY: Consent

DEPT.: Community Development

TITLE: Appointment of Volunteer Mediators

RECOMMENDATION

Appoint 13 volunteer mediators to a two-year term ending October 8, 2004.

FISCAL IMPACT—None.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

The Mountain View Mediation Program utilizes trained volunteer mediators to provide tenant/landlord and neighborhood mediation services for the community. In addition, the program was expanded in 1993 to handle consumer, workplace and person-to-person disputes.

In order to be eligible to serve as a volunteer mediator, an individual must be either a resident of Mountain View, own property in Mountain View or work in the City. Applicants must complete a written application explaining their interest in the program and their qualifications to be a mediator. A panel of two existing mediators and the Program Coordinator also interviews applicants. Those applicants who are selected to participate in the program must then successfully complete a 35-hour training course at Foothill College in mediation and communication techniques before being eligible for appointment to the program by the City Council.

Mediators help to resolve conflicts between individuals or groups by facilitating communication between the parties as a neutral, unbiased third person. Mediators do not judge who is right or wrong or force a decision or solution on either party. The mediator's role is to help the parties involved in a dispute to communicate with each other and find a resolution acceptable to all parties involved. Typical types of disputes which the program handles are rental deposit issues, noise, eviction notices and pet issues, such as barking dogs.

The volunteer mediators are appointed to two-year terms with a portion of the group being newly selected and appointed each year. This staggered term appointment ensures that there is always a core of experienced mediators to help the new mediators and provide continuity to the program from year to year.

AGENDA: October 8, 2002

PAGE: 2

Display ads were placed in the *Mountain View Voice* announcing the recruitment of volunteer mediators. In addition, an announcement was placed in *The View* and flyers were distributed at a variety of community facilities.

Six individuals have successfully completed the required 35 hours of mediation training and are being recommended for appointment to the program. In addition, seven existing mediators are requesting reappointment to the program and are also being recommended as they have been active participants in the program and their experience will be important to help the new mediators develop their skills. Recommended volunteer mediator appointments are shown on the attached list (Attachment 1). With the recommended appointments, the program will have a total of 22 volunteer mediators. Although this is less than the maximum program capacity of 25 mediators, it is considered adequate to handle the program case load.

PUBLIC NOTICING—Agenda posting.

Prepared by:

Adriana Garefalos
Senior Planner

Approved by:

Linda Lauzze
Administrative and Neighborhood
Services Manager

Elaine Costello
Community Development Director

Kevin C. Duggan
City Manager

AG/6/CAM
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Attachment: 1. List of Recommended Volunteer Mediator Appointments